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ABSTRACT

Many college students who have been labeled semi-literate because of their excessively poor writing ability in fact possess a neurological dysfunction known as dysgraphia. The symptoms of this disorder range from a consistent but minor inability to spell to a major disarrangement of letters and syntax. The best way to identify dysgraphic students is to acquaint composition teacher with the writing peculiarities that distinguish them from students with more traditional deficiencies. Unfortunately, even when such students have been identified treatment is not easy. In individual conferences some improvement in spelling has been produced through overlearning, a technique used for elementary school students with similar problems. Severely dsygraphic students at many universities may receive help from vocational rehabilitation programs. The most valuable help for dysgraphics, however, can be given in the classroom by composition teachers if they ignore spelling and instead stress the composing process and standard grammar. To establish the causes of deficient writing among college students in general, it is essential to isolate the specific causes as they are discovered. Identifying dysgraphia makes it possible to recognize other factors that contribute to the label of illiteracy. (Student papers are appended.) (FL)

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Amy Richards

Writing Dysfunction; A Problem in College Composition Courses.

The sad condition of college student writing is now news! And it is true the unprepared high school student and open admissions policies have brought many problems to college English. One of the most frustrating and difficult to diagnose comes with the dysgraphic student, the writer with a neurological dysfunction that he rationalizes as "nervousness" and his teacher calls illiteracy. Infrequently within a large institution of higher learning is dysgraphia diagnosed for what it is.

But let me start with my own education towards the identification of dysgraphia. One day about five years ago I found taped to my office door a note communicating the message that the signer, Betty, would like to discuss her problems in writing. The note was addressed der Any (Dear Amy). I did wonder after meeting with Betty and listening to her talk lucidly about her job and aspirations why her letter was illiterate and in the salutation she had ommitted the capital of "Dear" and had used my first name. At this time I had not heard of the studies done on language disorders in children or the hypothesis that these disorders arise from lesions or neuron disturbances, genetically, congenitally, or traumatically acquired. So, I told Betty to try remedial English over again--she just needed more practice. Betty failed in remedial courses for a year before she dropped out of school. It wasn't until several students later that I found the term dysgraphia in connection with elementary school learning problems and reapplied it at the college level. I know now that Betty was probably dysgraphic and that in my early teaching years others had preceded her.

Language theorists schematize the learning of language skills as occuring at four levels; the schema reflects the observation of common sense: first, words and syntax are received through the ear; second, these two are combined in speech; third, with simple syntax and vocabulary under control, the child learns to read; finally, mastery of speaking and reading leads to an ability to express thoughts in writing. Deaf or blind children encounter difficulties at certain of these levels; students with language disorders reveal defects at one or all of these levels. They may not hear syntax or vocabulary normally, express it adequately, translate it in reading effectively, or their defect may appear as dysfunctional writing. There are university students who seem to manifest difficulties at all of these levels or at one or two, but I concern myself here with the dysgraphics, those students most patently the problem in English composition courses.

Learning how to diagnose writing dysfunction took time. Its identification came as student after student revealed phenomena in his writing similar to that of children in the illustrations found in such books as Learning Disabilities by Johnson and Myklebust (Grune Stratton:N.Y. 1964) or Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Talk too Good Either by Louise Clarke (Penguin, 1974). In order to certify my diagnoses, I took my file of papers to the University Division of Speech and Hearing where a specialist in speech acquistion in children comfirmed my diagnoses--although she refused to believe the papers came from university students.

If the approach of a dysgraphic student to my office is imminent, a warning comes from the teacher's comment " He seems bright but he can't spell". These are the words I used to describe Mr. Dare in a remedial English class three years ago. Mr. Dare was in his thirties,

a Chrysler factory worker, active in the union. He challenged me in class on my interpretation of an article in Newsweek. His logic was sound; his vocabulary excellent. His insight into Katherine Ann Porter's He was good, and I looked forward to reading his paper. Number 1 * is the paper he wrote. After inquiring whether he had actually attended high school (he had), I decided something unusual was afoot. The words circled on his paper are those he spotted in conference as being misspelled. They, and others he wasn't able to identify, are typical of the dysgraphic's inability to revisualize words. There are nineteen misspellings on page one, a high number for a college student, and these misspellings are of an uncommon sort. The dysgraphic misspellings are characterized by reversals falut(line 18), rasining (line 2) or gross mutilations such as ambivous(line 22) or spargoat (line 30) as well as variant spellings of convince such as convines(line 39).

It is worthwhile to describe Mr. Dare a little more fully so that the complex and variable nature of the syndrome of the learning disabled becomes clear. Dare had such severe behavioral problems in grade school that he was thrown out because he was considered disturbed and retarded. A school psychologist tested his IQ at 150 and he was allowed to return. He could not read separate letters of the alphabet nor could he identify by letter designations the tool bins at Chrysler where he must replace tools (located them spatially). However, he could read essays, short stories and magazines without any effort.

By the time the writer of paper number 2 arrived in my office I could name the phenomenon I was seeing. The dysgraphic Mrs. B was such an artful story teller that I taped some of her stories to prove to myself and to her, that her ability to use and organize the spoken word

was indeed superior. When I would ask her to listen to her tapes she could indicate where commas and periods belonged, but when she was asked to write out the story she had just narrated, the results were like this.* On paper number 2 notice in lines 8 through 12 , periods are needed after fighting, help, and ear and at least three commas would be helpful once this run-on is turned into sentences. These four lines characterize much of the sentence structure in her paper. In line 2 a pronoun is missing; at the same spot probably the word after has been forgotten and an article ommitted before hole (line 22). Line 25 reveals word order confusion and possibly the loss of a word. These various anomolies in sentence structure are symptomatic of dysgraphia. Another symptom is Mrs. B's inconsistent use of capitals. Capitals are used for Bleeding (line 16) and Rheumatic (line23) and in numerous other unwarranted places. The use of the lower case in the der of Betty's letter as well as in the title of He of Dare's paper indicates a similar inability to discriminate between upper and lower case letters. The peculiar shifts in printing on Mrs. B's paper could be indicative of a spatial disorientation, and the writer's tendency on the second page to extrude instead of indent for the paragraph most certainly is. In addition there is a host of spelling corruptions such as cerreary for career and sarger for surgery.

A comparison of Mrs. B's problems with Mr. Dare's illustrates the variety of difficulties experienced by these two writers. Mrs. B like Mr. Dare could read and comprehend dense material silently, but whereas he could read out loud, she could not read out loud beyond six words.

He could transcribe at length without error; she could not transcribe correctly. Her spatial perception was weak; he depended on his to hold his job. Her spoken syntax was superior; her written almost impossible to decipher. His spoken syntax was superior; his written weak. Both spelled miserably.

The degree of efficiency among dysgraphics varies as greatly as do the features of their particular syndromes. But before I survey this range as it appears in college students, I wish to identify other students who manifest certain dysgraphic-like behavours but whose problems but whose problems stem from a different source. These students are from non-English speaking backgrounds. The spelling of students with Spanish sur-names can appear strange; raze for race, proposital for proposal, simply because they have confused the Spanish with the English spelling. These same students may leave out pronouns as did Mrs. B, and some second generation Orientals may drop verbs and badly disarrange sentence sense as she did. In addition it is important to realize that both Dare and Mrs. B employ grammatical variants, an aspect of dialect rather than spelling.

The range of dysfunction appearing in our classes may encompass students with defects more severe than Dare's and B's or students like Maureen (paper 3) who occasionally corrupts the spelling of a word but who is otherwise a successful writer. In the middle range is James (paper4) who misspells frequently but who handles syntax with minor limitations.

Now what can we do for these students? First of all what can we do in conference periods? The symptoms of dysgraphia even in the hands

of the most experienced personnel, working over long periods of time are difficult to treat and many times are totally impossible to erase. Neverthless, techniques recommended for dysgraphic elementary school children have produced some improvement in students I have tutored in spelling. One technique that works for some is the old-fashioned method of overlearning. After the student sounds out the word, types it, or writesit, sometimes traces the letters with his finger as he sounds it, he writes it over and over and over again. Significantly, the dysgraphics I have encountered spelled their names correctly--even Betty of the der any letter---evidence that repetition is helpful. Some dysgraphics, especially if they are good readers, can identify misspelled words and then look them up in the dictionary; James (paper 4) was taught to do this.

Specialized help in spelling is inappropriate in the college classroom, but it is in the classroom the dysfunctional writer frequently makes his major advances in the composing process. Here he can be taught how to organize and develop papers and how to practice standard grammar---if his spelling is ignored. James had received no corrections on his paapers other than for spelling throughout high - school. His teachers felt compelled to stop and help him spell before they proceeded to anything else. The second paper written by him, paper 4A*, shows how much he improved after his freshman English teachers ignored spelling and concentrated on paper development. James' forte is art; he will never bring glory to the world of letters but he has passed freshman English with a D. The teaching technique most

successful with dysgraphics in the classroom, then, is to teach them what they can learn in areas they have not yet experienced while at the same time ignoring their spelling defects.

Specialized help of a particular sort exists within many universities for students with handicaps. If a student is severely dysgraphic, he can sometimes be referred to the division of vocational rehabilitation where he will be eligible to use the typists and readers who work with other disabled students in the university. The typist and the reader do not constitute therapy. Students will not be taught to spell or write but will be considered word blind. They must still learn in English classes how to organize and develop an essay and apply standard usage before they can dictate a paper into the tape recorder, as unsighted students do, to have it emerge from the typewriter spelled correctly by the typist.

The present figure for the number of children with learning disorders in the public school systems nationwide is ten percent. The percentage of learning disabled students entering the large urban university where I teach seems to be one and a half percent, a small number that creates a disproportionately large amount of frustration for the teacher and the dysfunctional student. Currently Mr.Abel (paper 5) is using the time of an English teacher, a tutor in the sophomore writing workshop, a counselor at vocational rehabilitation and others. The student has completed his major in Physics but has been enrolling in and dropping out of freshman English for six years. When he was in high school he stole spelling books from a grade school so that he could teach himself how to spell. He owns a shelf of composition booksthat he hopes will teach him to write. His current English teacher was able to diagnose him as a dysgraphic but his

the relief has come late--after six college years added to his twelve years in grade school struggling with the label of illiteracy. For the sake of Mr. Abel and others like him, early edentification of the learning disable student in college is imperative. In order to establish the causes of deficient writing among college students in general, it becomes essential to isolate the specific causes as they are discovered. Identifying dysgraphia clears the way to recognition of other factors that contribute to the label of illiteracy.

paper 1 Mr. Dare

the storie he, is a tragic asaple of the problems, of rasining a retard child. The mother dos'en under ← stand the problems that the boy has. She is more concern with what the neboreS think than ~~what~~ how the boy ~~feels~~ felt. She dos'en know that the boy has a heart, soul, and a mind. She pitty's the boy more than she loves him. No human beine wants pitty but she seem to felt that he is not human. She seem to think that he is the same as the bull wild, spotanous, and ~~dume~~ simple minded. She seem to think that all the famile problems are the fault of the boy's. She also seem to blame her husband for the boys promblem She said all of her relative are ambivous and brith. She wants the boy to go to The ~~to~~ countr home but she is scare of what her neber will think.

She seem to ~~felf~~ fell that all her trobles will go away when the boy is gone. The boy is the (spargoat) for the family he is blamed for ever thing that hapers to them. He is blamed for their povety, (Igomorents) and social standing. She seem to fell that too have an animal in the family belittle her and she trys to (convines) her nebors thay he is not an animal. She allso trys to (convice) her nebor that a clen woman can not produce an animal. that is why she trys to be so clen. At the end of the storie the boy cryed because →.

I would like to interduce you to my Sister Pearl May age 32 in 1967* finsh Collage to become a Lab tec working only 2 weeks at the gob finding out She didn't Like that Kind of work.

I interduce Her to you to explane Somthing that happen on February 2 1975. Pear over heard what She Thought was two pople fighting* being the type of person She is "Nosese" went to Help* as he aproch the man let go a good Right Cross and hit her in the ear* waiting for oboth b4w. later She Call me for Help. She and I went to the Hosp. we Learn that Her ear Had ben Bleeding most of the night and She Had to Have Sarger at 8:30 the next morning to repair the damage to her right ear. This upset me very much because at 19 Parger was dun on her heart and a pace mätainer was install because of Hole due to Preves Romatic fever. Althow the doctor try everthing befor placeing the mantainer Order he to rest most of the day for the Hole's to repair themself.

She felt that mush rest would be giving into her illness. So She decide to finnesh the dance Cerreary

by helping anther Dancer
Lizzie Johnson form a dance Group
that become Natshior wide
Dance is mind Such Name as Samie Davis Jr
The Surprims and The temptations.
and Showing Group how to dance like
The four top, Glads Night + the pep.
today she is Under Contract with
Berry Goody as Cordreographer
It her will power has anything to do
with the want to do somthing
her's will always over come her
Illness (Hopefully) Even being in
the Hosp today after her
Surgeries to the later She was
up and walking a frand to
to Elavater.

Paper 3. Maureen

The Romantic Wars

"Join the army. Travel around the world, visit new and strange lands. Have the epcitement of your life time. Meet many new people and friends. Then kill them." This modern saying shows us how society's attitudes agreement towards was itself This is Mainly because of the great changes in the world from the 16th century till and today. (P. Henry. 18th C.) unless only Henry V

In the 16th century was was a way of life. With all new discoveries and new nations cropping up all over being powerful, having wealth and land were the goals in life. There were nations to be Conquered and crusades to be made. This greatly affected the Society's attitudes towards war. As seen in the speech from Henry V poem "Henry V" war was honor, war was wealth, and war was Godly! There was nothing

would end in death for both sides. Our values have changed, causing other fields such as technocracy? and science, ~~to be what~~ do you mean the cause for which we strive for. power is centered in other areas? I feel the effect, of the world wars, especially the last one, has shown us the ugly devastating side of war that had never been seen before. Television, radio, as well as, the vass population itself has increased the knowledge of war's effect. Before, almost always the glories of war were the only things that were noted. Also the hardships ~~seldom~~ never ~~felt the pains~~ & pains of war were never felt by those who rule society, the ~~aristocrats~~ Aristocrats. Now, of course, war is felt by most everyone, for example the depression the world, as well as the U. S., suffered after W.W. II.

War romantic in 1976? Hardly, and is certainly (over)

greater than to be a ~~———~~ warrior for your country. To
live, to kill, to steal, to conquer conqueor were sacred.
These were the men whose whoose names would stand out
above the rest. These were the men who would not cheapen
their pride or there manhood, for this was indeed the
only proof of greatest greatness. one would have. Their society offered little
recognition of any other field, c.s. in fact, they condemned condemed it.
Nothing else was important to them.

This romantic view of war could never be held in todays
world. There is no need for it. We have discovered
the tragidies TRagedies of war and the devastating effects it
has on both sides. We don't not strive no longer strive for all power through th ough
war as much as before. This is because the nations of
the world have become so powerful, that to do so

Titeal
is
Review Exerise

This person isn't hearing what he really wants! He is letting other things get in his way. A good Example is he is going on his lunch branck. When he really Supposut to be taking care of business.

Child Rearing

There are several different ways of child rearing, each based on a different theory or philosophy. I am going to write on only four of these ways. The first is permissive, The permissive parent allows the child a great deal of freedom in regulating his own activites. The parent may have a brief talk with the child about the family rules. No great demans are made on the child for house hold responsibility, like cleaning up after he has messed up. The parent makes it so that the child eventually starts to use the parent as he wishes, not as a person that the child would want to grow up to be like, somebody to look up to. The parent hardly punish the child for doing bad things.

The second is authoritarian, The authoritarion parent believe that Obedience is a very imporant part of rearing a child. The child is taught to do what he is told and not too asks any question

If a event(T_1) occur two second before a event (T_2) occur on the moons. prove that it is impo ~~that the event can~~ for the event can occur simultaneous on another frame of reference with a velocity v

$$T'_{1\,2} = \frac{T_1 - \frac{vx_1}{c^2}}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

$$T'_2 = \frac{T_2 - \frac{vx_2}{c^2}}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$